

Grateful Med: Gateway to world-wide literature

Beula B Horak MLS

Claire C Hamasu MLS

Grateful Med is a computer software package developed by the National Library of Medicine which provides access to MEDLINE and other medical databases. The program is available for both IBM and Macintosh computers, is inexpensive, easy to install and has excellent documentation. Health professionals in all areas find Grateful Med to be a user-friendly, cost-effective way to search current, world-wide medical literature.

As a busy health professional, where do you go for information?

Where do you look when one of your patients develops a rare or unusual disease? How do you handle your patients' difficult questions? Where do you go for advice on the best form of treatment? Do you confer with colleagues, consult a textbook from your office shelf, visit a library and start looking through journals, or call your librarian and ask for a MEDLINE? Now there's one more option available for finding medical information: Grateful Med.

What is Grateful Med?

Grateful Med is a computer software package that makes it easy to search MEDLINE. Most health professionals are familiar with MEDLINE, which is the computerized counterpart of *Index Medicus*, a biomedical index produced by the National Library of Medicine (NLM). The MEDLINE computer file consists of citations and abstracts of articles from over 3700 journals published world-wide and is updated weekly. MEDLINE is typically searched by trained specialists who call the NLM computer and use computer language to produce a list of articles on a specific subject. Grateful Med provides a "user friendly" way to search MEDLINE by eliminating the need to learn a special searching language. Grateful Med offers medical information that is current, inexpensive and available 24 hours a day from an office or home computer.

Searching Grateful Med:

To use Grateful Med, the searcher fills in designated lines on the Grateful Med input screen to look for authors, words in

titles or abstracts, or subject words (Medical Subject Headings). Then, the searcher sits back while the program connects with the NLM computer, does the search, downloads the results, and disconnects. Once disconnected, the resulting list of articles is reviewed. Because the user is charged only for the time actually connected to the NLM computer, an average Grateful Med search costs \$3 to \$4. Grateful Med can be used to search MEDLINE back to 1966, as well as some specialized databases such as Cancerline and AIDSline which are also produced by the National Library of Medicine.

Many health professionals are taking advantage of the opportunity to bring world-wide medical information into their offices by doing their own computerized literature searches; numerous Medical Schools and Residency programs are now incorporating online searching skill classes into their curriculum. David J Elpern MD of Kauai states: "In today's world an online search is as positive an addition to medical practice as X-rays or biopsies were in the decades past." If you have been considering trying your own searches, Grateful Med may be the answer for you.

Grateful Med requirements

The Grateful Med program is available for both IBM and Macintosh computers. The IBM version requires DOS version 2.0 or higher, a Hayes Smartmodem or fully compatible modem, at least 384K RAM (512K RAM recommended), and one or more floppy disk drives (a hard disk with a minimum of 2MB of free space is strongly recommended).

The Macintosh version of Grateful Med will work on a Macintosh Plus, SE, SE30, and II Series. It requires System 4.3 or higher and a Hayes or Hayes-compatible modem. Most users also attach a printer. The program comes with free updates, a user manual, troubleshooting guide, and an excellent tutorial.

For more information

Hawaii Medical Library has received an 18-month grant from the National Library of Medicine to introduce Grateful Med to all health professionals in Hawaii who are not affiliated with a medical library and to train them on Grateful Med. If you would like to be part of the program, or if you are interested in a Grateful Med demonstration, please contact Beula Horak or Claire Hamasu at Hawaii Medical Library (536-9302).

Information on Grateful Med is also available from the librarian at your hospital, or from the National Library of Medicine MEDLARS Management Division in Bethesda, Maryland at 1-800-638-8480.

Reference Department, Hawaii Medical Library

Requests for reprints to:

Beula B Horak
Hawaii Medical Library
1221 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

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who are already infected. Physicians should be aware of the many ways in which TB presents a particular threat to them. Hawaii law requires periodic evaluation for TB of health-care providers employed by various institutions such as hospitals and care homes. Although most physicians are not covered by these statutes, physicians should be aware of the recommendations for periodic screening and should assure themselves that they too be screened periodically.

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